EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The International Security Assistance Network: Paving the Way for Greater Customer Involvement

By

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The International Security Assistance Network (I-SAN) is the newest addition to the security assistance automation community. Adapted from the highly successful Security Assistance Network (SAN), the I-SAN incorporates many of the SAN's capabilities. In this regard, the I-SAN will increase the international customers' awareness and enhance their capability to internally manage their security assistance training program. The intent of this article is to provide an overview of the I-SAN. Specifically, it describes how the I-SAN compares to the SAN, what hardware and software are necessary, what the benefits are for international customers as well as for their U.S. counterparts, how to get access to the I-SAN, what help is available once registered and, finally, what future developments are being contemplated for the I-SAN.

What is the I-SAN?

Any discussion of the I-SAN should first start with the SAN. In the early 1990s, the SAN was established to provide various forms of security assistance information and to provide an initial e-mail capability to SAOs, unified command staffs, and CONUS security assistance managers (e.g., international military student managers at DoD and military service schools). In accordance with the Security Assistance Management Manual (SAMM), Section 1504, the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management (DISAM) serves as the program manager for the SAN with day-to-day SAN operations performed by the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) in Alexandria, Virginia. Similar to the SAN, the I-SAN is an Internet worldwide web-based repository of information and links designed to enhance security assistance communications and coordination. It is a tool that will directly support the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) strategic plan goals to enhance communications across the security cooperation community (see DSCA strategy USG-1-3) and significantly improve service to our customers (C-2-1).[1]

Inspired by some international customers' knowledge of the SAN and its capabilities, coupled with their desire to have access to the training capabilities the SAN offers, the ball was set in motion to identify what aspects of the SAN could be made available to international customers. A thorough review of all SAN capabilities indicated that the vast majority of resources could be made available to authorized host-country personnel. In particular, access to the training management functions offer the most potential and interest. In fact, several international customers expressed their desire to have access to an automated copy of the Training Military Articles and Services Listing (MASL) and their Standardized Training Listing (STL). The I-SAN, coupled with a modified Training Management System (TMS) program application,

provides the international customer this capability.

Additionally, the I-SAN offers a document search capability that will allow any user to search all open, unclassified acquisition statutes, regulations, and publications. The document search menu provides a link to the worldwide web version of the Defense Acquisition Deskbook (DAD). DAD is a compilation of all acquisition references, including the Security Assistance Management Manual (SAMM), and is updated on a monthly basis. Users are able to search all or specified references for keywords or phrases. It is a tremendous time saving resource.

Lastly, the I-SAN offers bulletin board and electronic library capabilities. These menus are at present general in nature but will be further developed as customer requests and specific needs materialize. Any user may post items to the bulletin boards or library. Potential postings include general policy messages applicable to the international customer, messages that affect the training community, as well as general interest files.

What are the benefits of an I-SAN account?

In a short phrase: quick, comprehensive access. Given the capabilities described above, the management and research benefits of an I-SAN account should be readily evident. U.S. and international training managers can prosper in that the I-SAN will permit international training managers to more closely manage their training plans. Purchasing countries will have the capability to monitor programs directly rather than relying on SAOs for every piece of information. With both SAO and host-country training managers able to access virtually the same information, coordination should be much more complete and efficient. However, by no means should a reliance on the SAN and I-SAN substitute for personal, face-to-face coordination. Rather, the I-SAN capability is just another tool to make that personal coordination more effective.

Getting Started - Establishing an I-SAN Account

Given the benefits the I-SAN offers, the future demand for I-SAN access may be substantial. Before outlining the procedures for requesting an account, it is necessary to point out who is eligible for an I-SAN account. As stated earlier, the I-SAN was developed specifically for the international customer. Since the I-SAN contains unclassified, yet "access controlled" information, it is password protected and only authorized personnel having a need to know may view its contents. In time, several international customers may be interested in establishing I-SAN accounts. Since the system is new and does have some hardware and software requirements, SAOs are perhaps in the best position to identify prospective I-SAN users. Moreover, since the I-SAN involves an automated, technical interface for the customer, SAOs need to be kept in the loop with regard to I-SAN access issues and are an integral part of the I-SAN account establishment process. In this regard, the procedures for requesting an I-SAN account are:

•	International customers located at overseas sites, desiring access to the I-SAN and use of the Training Management System (TMS) software shall contact the SAO chief or training manager. The SAO will validate the prospective user's needs in order to make a recommendation with regard to the scope of access.

•	Following the SAO's review, the request will be forwarded via e-mail, along with relevant information (user's name, country, position, phone number, etc.), to Mr. Tim Reardon or

Major Dennis Olson at DISAM. The SAO should also send a copy of the request to their unified command training manager. Registered SAN users in the SAO can submit requests directly via the SAN.

- DISAM will establish an I-SAN account for the customer and provide the user name and password to authorized new users through a secure process.

- Foreign customers located in the United States (such as embassy personnel or foreign liaison officers) may send requests directly to DISAM. DISAM will coordinate and validate the request with the appropriate SAO. Following the validation step, DISAM will provide user name and password to the new users via the same secure process.

- The U.S. military departments (MILDEPs) are responsible for reviewing the Training Military Articles and Services Listing (MASL) available on the SAN for releasability to the international customer. If the full range of the SAN MASL is not releasable, the responsible MILDEP will make the necessary adjustments and provide the revised MASL and course descriptions for posting to the I-SAN.

- DISAM will conduct training on the system as requested, either on location at DISAM or in-country with all costs chargeable to the customer.

Hardware and software requirements

Customers are responsible for all telecommunications and hardware costs. DSCA, DISAM, and the SAO cannot assume any responsibility for paying Internet Service Provider or other telecommunications costs. With regard to the minimum equipment requirements for accessing the I-SAN, it is highly advisable to consider a personal computer (PC) with a minimum of 32 megabytes of Random Access Memory (RAM) for work on the Internet today. While the I-SAN is designed to minimize RAM requirements, links provided on the I-SAN may connect the user to a far more complex web page that will require higher amounts of RAM to operate efficiently. Additional hardware requirements include a CD-ROM drive and a modem. All software applications distributed by DISAM are now duplicated on CD-ROM disks rather than 3.5 inch floppy disks. The I-SAN operates under Windows 95 or Windows 98.

Questions concerning modem requirements should be directed to the Internet service provider or telephone/telecommunications office. In general, a faster modem means the user will be "on-line" for a shorter duration to accomplish a given task. ISDN is a faster, albeit more expensive, option than a modem for those areas where ISDN capability exists.

A frequently asked question concerns the need for any special software to access the SAN. The reply penned by Mr. John Clelan, DISAM's "SAN Man" in the Spring 1998 *DISAM Journal* is valid for I-SAN users as well as SAN users. Specifically, his response is, "No. In most cases all you need is a web browser such as Netscape or Microsoft Internet Explorer." Users should also insure the browser software is version 4.0 or higher. The browser will allow the user to navigate the Internet and the I-SAN. However, two additional software applications are required to take advantage of specific I-SAN capabilities. In order to manipulate the training data made available on the I-SAN (the Training MASL and ISTL), the user will have to acquire, install, and utilize a modified version of the Training Management System (TMS). Prospective users should coordinate with DISAM through the SAO or training manager to request a modified version of

TMS. With this software loaded and ready to work, how does one get "on-line"?

Going On-Line

Many state–side users, and possibly many international users, have Internet access available directly in their offices and can go straight to the I-SAN URL to the login screen. Users without direct Internet access, whether overseas or within the United States, should contract with an Internet service provider located in or that serves the area in which they are physically located. Utilizing a modem, they then dial a local number to access the Internet. Access to the Internet is required; there is no direct dial-in capability to access the I-SAN.

Technical Support

DISAM will only be capable of offering technical support for the TMS software application and I-SAN specific issues, such as log-in difficulties and the like. Any problems that users experience with their hardware (PCs, modems, etc.) or Internet access should be addressed to either the hardware component manufacturer or to the Internet service provider.   DISAM has established two primary points of contact for the I-SAN. They are:

Mr. Tim Reardon   treardon@disam.wpafb.af.mil   (937) 255-5850/5635

MAJ Dennis Olson   dolson@disam.wpafb.af.mil   (937) 255-5850/5635

When contacting one of the individuals above for assistance, please provide as much detail as possible about the specific problem. While limited in their capability to solve hardware or Internet access problems, they will certainly be capable of addressing I-SAN specific issues.

Future Improvements

International customers are already providing input regarding modifications to the modified TMS program. That input indicates that an international version of TMS is imminent. The "I-TMS" will be refined from international customer inputs regarding the portions of the STL data that are important to them.

The software presently provided to I-SAN subscribers is a slightly modified version of the TMS program — essentially the same program that our SAO training managers utilize. It allows the international training managers to access the same MASL and STL formats as their SAO counterparts. However, initial indications are that the international customer is in need of slightly different data. For instance, TMS in its present state will show an entire training program for an international student. U.S. training managers are interested in the entire program, but their primary interest is with the date training is scheduled to begin. The international customer, on the other hand, is more interested in knowing when their service member will depart for training in the U.S. and when the training will be completed.

I-TMS is but one example of a future enhancement for I-SAN users. Clearly the sun is just rising on the I-SAN, and it has a long way to go. Additional requirements will be identified as users become more familiar with the network and its capabilities. While DISAM and other U.S. activities will not be able to meet every expectation, each and every recommendation received — whether from an international or U.S. user — will be considered. Thus, international users are

encouraged to pass specific comments and suggestions to one of the points of contact identified for technical support. That individual will insure your recommendations are thoroughly considered and implemented as appropriate. So let your fingers do the walking and get those ideas typed up and sent.

End Notes

[1] The DSCA 1998-2003 Strategic Plan is published in *The DISAM Journal of International Security Assistance Management*, Winter 1998-1999. The plan is also accessible from the DSCA web page (http://www.dsca.osd.mil).

About the Author

Major Dennis M. Olson, Jr. (Instructor) is the seminar director for all European seminars conducted at the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management. He is a member of the U.S. Army Aviation branch and is qualified to fly the UH-1H, OH-58 and AH-1F helicopters. He is also an Army Foreign Area Officer specializing in Western Europe. Major Olson came to DISAM with nine years of unit and staff experience in Europe and holds a Master of Arts degree in Western European Studies from Indiana University and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Montana. He is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the Defense Language Institute where he studied French.